



Introduction to Body Image: Overview, Skills & Group Discussion

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She/her/they/them

What is Body Image?

Write down what you think about when you hear “body image”



What is Body Image

- The subjective picture or mental image of one's own body
- Just noticing the body...THAT'S IT
 - From there we attach judgements, adjectives and ideas to those mental images
- Rules for Being Human
 - Coming back to core values/beliefs



Body Oppression

- How far does this go back and where is it present today?
 - Middle of the 18th century French Philosophers
 - Africans people were seen as “loving food and sensuous” there for being fatter
 - Europeans had “rational self control” and being slimmer was seen as being superior which meant controlling what you ate
 - Having an even complexion was seen as being holier and more virtuous in the early 19th Century
 - If you’re not conforming or not working on changing, it’s your fault
 - Today it looks like
 - BMI, pressure to “lose weight first,” social media algorithms, COVID and Fat Bias, ect.

Let's talk about it!!!

- Sonya Renee Taylor
- *Your Body is not an Apology*
- Ladder of Hierarchy
 - Radical Self Love
 - How to identify when you're on the ladder
 - How to help clients identify when they're on the ladder
- What's your body mantra?
- What's your broken record statement when setting boundaries around body image?

Break Time!

Health at Every Size (HAES)

- Lindo Bacon, PhD
 - Essentially the OG of HAES
 - Health at Every Size: The Surprising Truth About Your Weight
- Being thin means you healthier...WRONG!!
- What we know now is that you can be healthy at any size
 - The biggest contributor to health is social positioning in the world
 - People make judgements on others visual appearance but know nothing about their health
 - Minority stress perspective
 - Bodies at they get older

Ways to identify subtle forms of fatphobia

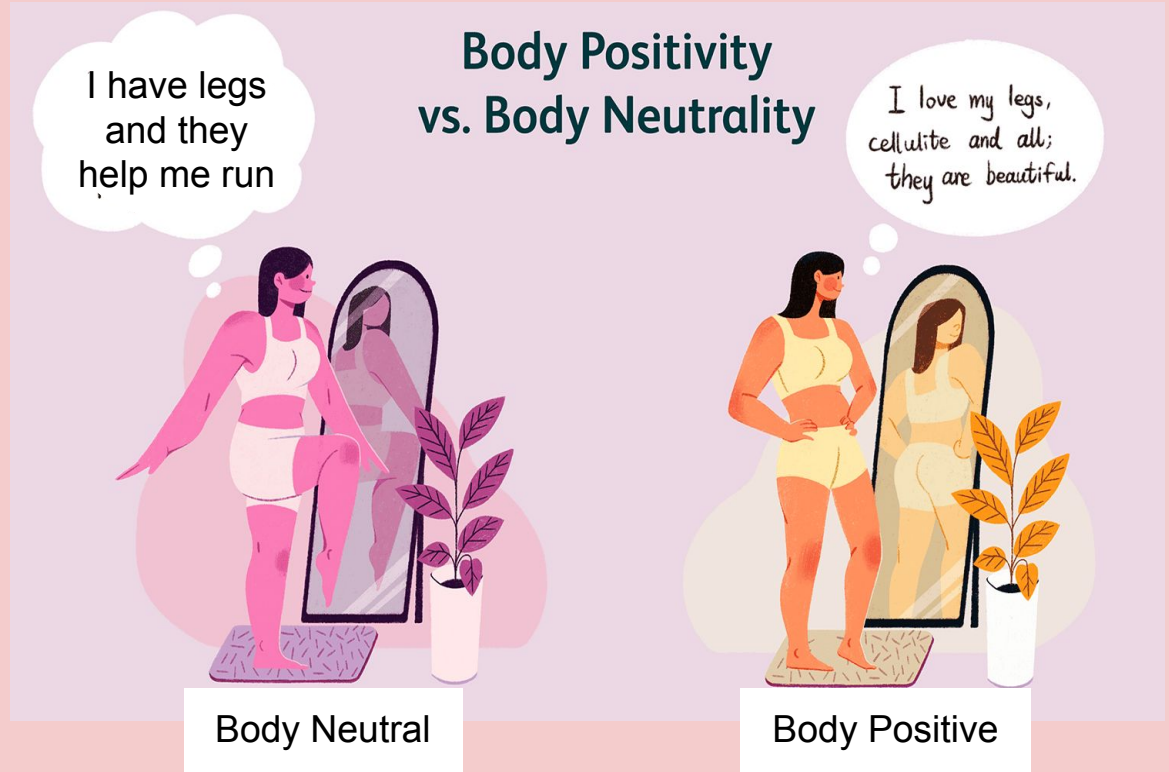
- I just want you to be healthy/I just want to be healthy
 - Health looks different for everyone but when someone says “I just want you to be healthy”
 - “I want you to appear to conform to my definition of your health” Aubrey Gordon
 - Turning the mind
 - Engaging in endurance and heart health
- Any diet related whatever
 - We know diets ultimately don't work
 - 80-95% of people who diet and lose weight, gain the weight back over a period of time
 - “You didn't try hard enough” and the cycle begins again
 - IF someone has to radically change their diet for lifestyle reasons, that's understandable but still something to be monitored by a doctor

Case Example

- She/her, cis-woman, identified herself as “over-weight”
 - Came to me to “get motivated to diet and lose weight/be healthy”
 - Some stress in marriage and feeling pressure from spouse to lose weight
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- Where would you start in getting to know this person’s health history with dieting, stigmas, and internalized fatphobia

Spectrum of Body image

- Negative Body Image
- Neutral Body Image
- Positive Body Image



Break Time!

Skills

- Mirror Activity
- Drawing the self
- String Activity
- Daily Affirmations x 3
 - Firm boundaries
- Clothes and Shopping
- Belly Love Art Activity
- Fight Flight Freeze Fawn in relation to Body Image

Mirror mirror on the wall... she can be a little sneaky

- Proprioception studies show us we're not good at seeing ourselves/knowing our bodies in space
- Before doing the Mirror Activity I explain this to clients in hopes of creating flexibility
- Using a Mirror or Camera
 - Negative emotion words up to 5 but NO ID'ing body parts
 - Neutral emotion words up to 5 and ID body part
 - Positive Emotion words up to 5 and ID body parts
- Practice this twice about 4 sessions apart and assign daily affirmations X3 in between sessions

Clothes and Shopping

- Get rid of clothes that don't fit
- You deserve clothes that fit you, lets budget!
- Make a shopping plan
 - when you're going shopping, with who, where, what you hope to buy, and how long you can tolerate going for.
- When trying on clothes, follow these [6 rules!](#)
- Make a goal or place a limit on trying on clothes in the morning

Belly Love Art Activity

- Use paper mache
 - Could do in person but sending folx home with a kit is more comfortable for me
- Have them paper mache a part of their body they may struggle with
 - The goal is to not make the paper mache smooth or perfect, have fun with it!
- Bring back paper mache
- Discuss how it was to focus on that part of the body
- Decorate that paper mache with whatever they want
 - Write affirmations
 - Make it sparkly
 - Have a conversation with that externalized part of you

Fight Flight Freeze Fawn, How does your Body Respond?

- Fleeing as the umbrella
 - Fawn
 - People pleasing in a body centered way
 - Dieting to fit into a social norm
 - Flight
 - Leg bouncing, compensatory responses
 - Freeze
 - Restrictive or “I don’t deserve” talk
 - Fight
 - Gripping, harming or talking negatively to parts of the body

Consult/discussion

Resources

You Have The Right to Remain Fat- By Virgie Tovar

Your Body Is Not an Apology- By Sonya Renee Taylor

Maintenance Phase- Podcast by Aubrey Gordon and Michael Hobbes

Body Image Workbook- Thomas F. Cash, PhD

[Tell Me I'm Fat](#)- This American Life Podcast, Episode 589

<https://www.radicalhealthalliance.org/>- Championing Health For Fat People

"Fearing The Black Body: The Racial Origins Of Fat Phobia."- By Sabrina Strings